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ABSTRACT

These two documents are part of the customer service training program provided to employees of a large metropolitan hospital. The first manual contains customer service training activities for the hospital's dietary aides, cashiers, patient service representatives, and parking attendants. The activities are organized in three sections as follows: understanding customers (behavior choices, tips for assertive behavior, internal and external customers, best and worst experiences as a customer, tips to improve customer service); communicating with customers (verbal communication, listening, nonverbal communication, questioning, using communication tools); and finding solutions on the job (resolving conflict, case studies, customer service tools, seven practical steps to customer problem-solving). Concluding the manual are four sets of job-specific tools for dealing with difficult customers. The second manual, which is designed for supervisors in the hospital's dispatch department, contains all the activities included in the first manual plus activities dealing with the following topics: interpreting body language, "I" and "you" messages, and accommodating other listening styles; giving and receiving criticism (types of criticism, reactions to criticism, techniques for receiving criticism); and dealing with difficult employees (techniques for dealing with difficult employees and transforming their gripes to goals). (MN)

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St. Louis Community College

Community Development Division

Customer Service Training

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Developed by
Workplace Literacy Services Center

NEW PARADIGM for EFFECTIVE WORKFORCE SKILLS

CE077614

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Activity

Ice Breaker

Can you connect all the dots with only four straight lines without lifting your pencil?

How does this activity relate to customer service and communication?

Understanding Your Customers

Your Worst Customer Communication Experience

What happened?	How did you react?	What frustrated you?	Would you react in the same way if this happened again?

Key Term

Three Behavior Choices

Highlight key words in the definitions below.

Aggressive behavior is standing up for your rights but expressing yourself in a way that violates the rights of others, or shows them no respect. Aggression may include sarcasm, humiliating insults, intimidating or overpowering the other person in order to win or dominate.

Passive behavior is giving in to other people's requests, demands or feelings without regard to what you want or how you feel. Passive behavior is based on the belief that other people's feelings, desires, and opinions are more important or correct than yours, or that you will experience negative consequences if you express your feelings, opinions or desires, or out of a wish to avoid conflict at all costs. Passive behavior is often expressed by silence.

Assertive behavior is asking for what you want, stating your opinion, or expressing your feelings in direct and honest ways that show your respect for yourself and others. Assertion is a way of standing up for your rights, yet not violating the rights of others.

Key Term

Define the following.

Aggressive means _____

_____

_____

Passive means _____

_____

_____

Assertive means _____

_____

_____

Question

In each of the worst customer communication examples, was the reaction

Aggressive?

Passive?

Assertive?

Which choice would give us what we need? _____

_____

_____

_____

Why? _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Key Term

Tips for Assertive Behavior

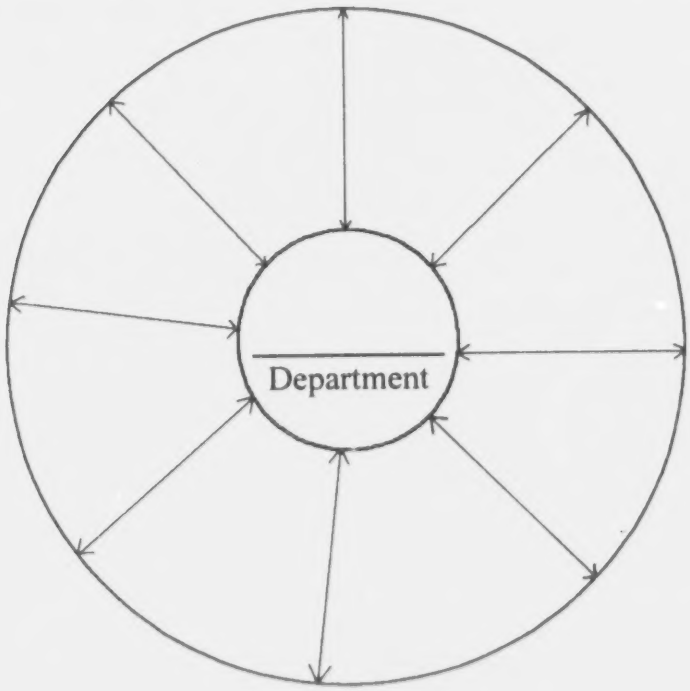
- Ask for what you want: "I need/want … ."
- State your thought or opinion: "I think … ."
- Express your feelings honestly: "I feel … ."
- Show respect for yourself and others.
- Stand up for your rights, not violating the other's rights.
- Aim for a win/win resolution.

What Do You Do?

On an average workday, I do the following:

Activity

Who Depends on You?



Why is your department important to the hospital?

Note Taking

Your Internal and External Customers

Internal/External Customers

Which customers are internal? _____

_____

_____

_____

Which customers are external? _____

_____

_____

_____

Which is the more difficult to deal with? Why?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Question

Your Best Experience as a Customer

What has been your best experience as a customer?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

In a group, define customer service.

Customer service is _____

_____

_____

_____

Compare your definition with the other group's definition.

Activity

Observation Sheet

Is the employee doing the following?

	Yes	No
Looking and acting professionally	☐	☐
Listening and responding to all customers	☐	☐
Responding quickly when help is needed	☐	☐
Keeping personal conversation with coworkers to a minimum	☐	☐
Being assertive with all internal and external customers	☐	☐

What other behaviors did you observe? _____

_____

_____

Note Taking

Tips to Improve Customer Service

If you were a business owner, manager, or supervisor, what customer service skills would you want from your employees?

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Communicating With Customers

Key Term

Verbal Communication

I-Message vs You-Message

Is there a problem with the following statement? "You need to sign this."

How do people typically react when we start sentences with "you"?

Highlight the key words in the definitions.

You-Messages—blame, judge, evaluate, label, hurt other's feelings, damage relationships, put others on the defensive, diminish other's self-esteem and damage the good feelings that are present in a relationship.

I-Messages—tell another person that you have important needs, asks for cooperation, and is a direct and honest statement of what you want.

I-Message Example:

I need/want you to sign this

because the supply order has to be faxed by noon.

Activity

With a partner, write a you-message. Exchange the you-message with another group. Change the you-message into an I-message.

You-message:

_____

_____

_____

I-message:

I need/want _____

because _____

How will this affect communication in your department?

In your home?

_____

_____

Activity

Role Play

What communication problems exist in your department?

_____

_____

Role play a scene.

What happened? _____

_____

_____

Are Both Customers Getting What They Need?

Was the communication successful? Why or why not?

_____

_____

Was the communication aggressive, passive, or assertive?

_____

Were I-messages used?

_____

What would you recommend that each person do differently?

_____

_____

Activity

Listening

What is the difference between listening and hearing?

Which is a skill: listening or hearing?

Give examples of the best listeners you know. Why?

Skim

Blocks to Good Listening

Highlight all distractions that are true for you. Then circle how you would eliminate any distractions.

Three Main Types of Listening Blocks

1. Visual Distractions

- Lack of eye contact
- Distance
- Writing

Eliminate Visual Distractions by:

- Maintaining eye contact.
- Leaning forward toward the speaker.
- Focus on the key points and summarize.

2. Noise and Movement Distractions

- Talking
- People moving
- Paper shuffling
- Phones
- Music, TV

Eliminate Noise and Movement Distractions by:

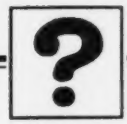
- Movement—Place your back to the movement if you are distracted in a conversation; sit where your ability to see movement is minimized.

3. Emotional/Mental Distractions

- Anger
- Fear
- Being unprepared
- Boredom
- Daydreaming
- Jumping to conclusions
- Worrying
- Interrupting
- Poor self-esteem/attitude

Eliminate Emotional/Mental Distractions by:

- Writing down what you are angry about and dealing with it later.
- Organizing for meetings.
- Preparing for meetings and listening.
- Taking notes if you are bored or daydreaming.
- Bringing a positive attitude to each conversation.
- Writing down the worst outcome you can think of if you are worried about something.
- Identifying the distraction.
- Writing down the distraction and dealing with it later.



Question

Blocks to Listening

- Visual distractions (V)
- Noise and movement distractions (N)
- Mental/emotional distractions (M)

What gets in the way of your listening?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Identify your listening blocks with (V), (N), or (M).

Which are most distracting for you? _____

Think of ways to overcome these listening blocks.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Activity

Listening Styles Profile Interpretation Guide

Highlight all statements that are true about you.

Preference Characteristics

P = People-Oriented Listeners

Positive Characteristics	*Negative Characteristics*
• Care and are concerned for others	• Are overinvolved with feelings of others
• Are nonjudgmental	• Avoid seeing faults in others
• Provide clear verbal and nonverbal feedback signals	• Internalize/Adopt emotional states of others
• Identify emotional states of others	• Are intrusive with others
• Are interested in building relationships	• Are overly expressive when giving feedback
• Notice others' moods quickly	• Are nondiscriminating in building relationships

A = Action-Oriented Listeners

Positive Characteristics	*Negative Characteristics*
• Get to the point quickly	• Tend to be impatient with rambling speakers
• Give clear feedback concerning expectations	• Jump ahead and reach conclusions quickly
• Concentrate on understanding the task at hand	• Jump ahead or finish thoughts of speakers
• Help others focus on what is important	• Get distracted easily by unorganized speakers
• Encourage others to be organized and concise	• Ask blunt questions
• Identify inconsistencies in messages	• Appear overly critical
	• Minimize relational issues and concerns

Adapted from Kittie W. Watson and Larry L. Barker, *Listening Styles Profile*, Pfeiffer & Co.

Listening Styles Profile Interpretation Guide (Continued)

Highlight all statements that are true about you.

Preference Characteristics

C = Content-Oriented Listeners

Positive Characteristics

- Value technical information
- Test for clarity and understanding
- Encourage others to provide support for their ideas
- Welcome complex and challenging information
- Look at all sides of an issue

Negative Characteristics

- Are overly detail oriented
- May intimidate others by asking pointed questions
- Minimize the value of nontechnical information
- Discount information from nonexperts
- Take a long time to make decisions

T = Time-Oriented Listeners

Positive Characteristics

- Manage and save time
- Let others know listening-time requirements
- Set time guidelines for meetings and conversations
- Discourage wordy speakers
- Give cues to others when time is being wasted

Negative Characteristics

- Tend to be impatient with time wasters
- Interrupt others
- Let time affect their ability to concentrate
- Rush speakers by frequently looking at watches/clocks
- Limit creativity in others by imposing time pressure

Adapted from Kittie W. Watson and Larry L. Barker, *Listening Styles Profile*, Pfeiffer & Co.

Activity

Accommodating Other Listening Styles

People Oriented	•
Action Oriented	•
Content Oriented	•
Time Oriented	•

Skim

Nonverbal Communication

Body Language Signals

Highlight the body language that is generally yours.

Posture		
Slumped	Erect, but relaxed	Erect, tense, rigid
Shoulders forward	Shoulders straight	Shoulders back
Shifting often	Few shifts, comfortable	Jerky shifts, or planted in place
Chin down	Head straight or slight tilt	Chin up or thrust forward
Gestures		
Fluttering hand movements	Casual hand movements	Chopping or jabbing hand movements
Twisting motions	Relaxed hands	Clenched hands, or pointing
Shoulder shrugs	Hands open, palms out	Sweeping arms
Frequent head nodding	Occasional head nodding	Sharp, quick nods
Facial expressions		
Lifted eyebrows, pleading look, wide-eyed, rapid blinking	Relaxed, thoughtful, caring or concerned look, few blinks	Furrowed brow, tight jaw, tense look, unblinking glare
Nervous or guilty smile	Genuine smile	Patronizing or sarcastic smile
Chewing lower lip	Relaxed mouth	Tight lips
Shows anger with averted eyes, blushing, guilty look, crying	Shows anger with serious look, slight flush of color	Shows anger with disapproving scowl, very firm mouth or bared teeth, extreme flush
Voice		
Quiet, soft, higher pitch	Resonant, firm, pleasant	Sarcastic laughter
Hesitations, uhs, ahs, stopping in "midstream"	Smooth, even-flowing, comfortable delivery	Statements sound like orders
Nervous laughter	Laughter only with humor	Insults
Statements sound like questions with voice tone rising at the end	Voice tones stay even when making statement	Vulgarity
		Demeaning language
		Negative remarks

Which column is aggressive? Which is assertive? Which is passive?

What column contains most of your highlights?

Key Term

What Do Nonverbals Mean?

Write your interpretation of the following nonverbals.

1. Nail biting _____
2. Arms crossed _____
3. Tapping fingers _____
4. Rolling eyes _____
5. Twirling hair _____
6. Slumping/Slouching _____
7. Avoiding eye contact _____
8. Nodding _____
9. Bored facial expression _____
10. Smirking _____

Activity

Role Play Nonverbal Behaviors

With partner(s), role play a real work-related problem.

Observers, what nonverbal behaviors did you observe?

Nonverbal Behaviors

- Tone of voice _____
- Facial expression _____
- Gestures _____
- Posture _____
- Eye-contact _____

What suggestions would you make for improving the nonverbal behavior?

Key Term

Questioning

What are the "*5 Ws*?"

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

[and _____]

An ***open question*** _____

_____

_____

A ***closed question*** _____

_____

_____

Key Term

Which of the ***5 Ws and How*** create open questions and which create closed?

Open Questions	Closed Questions

Using open questions, role play a scene with the customers below.

An angry customer?

A confused customer?

Activity

Using the Communication Tools

Review

What tools have we discussed?

What are the advantages and disadvantages of each?

Tool	Advantage	Disadvantage

Does timing and place play a part in how successful each tool will be?

- Would an I-message work in a busy hallway?

- Would addressing someone's listening style be effective 5 minutes before the end of a shift?

Finding Solutions on the Job

Key Term

Resolving Conflict

Create examples of the following.

- _____ I lose/You lose
- _____ I win/You lose
- _____ I lose/You win
- _____ I win/You win

Which of the four is most common?

Which would improve customer service?

Label each of the four as aggressive, passive, assertive.

Activity

Case Studies

Case Study 1

Review handout.

Answer the following questions.

As the _____ what would you do? As the _____ ?

Does this happen often? Why or why not? _____

How is customer service affected for both internal and external customers? _____

_____

What can be done to solve this? _____

What would be an example of a win/win solution? _____

Case Study 2

Create your own case study and solve with a partner.

Activity

Customer Service Tools—Review

Tool #1: Verbal Communication

Change the following statement to an I-message.

"You need to communicate better with the next shift."

I need/want _____

because _____

Why avoid you-messages? _____

Tool #2: Listening

What are the three main blocks to listening?

_____ _____ _____

What keeps you from being a better listener?

_____ _____ _____

What listening style does each of these letters represent?

P _____

A _____

C _____

T _____

What is your Listening Style? _____

Activity

Tool #3: Nonverbal Communication

Give some examples of body language that show *assertive* behavior?

_____

_____

_____

Give some examples of body language that show *passive* behavior?

_____

_____

_____

Give some examples of body language that show *aggressive* behavior?

_____

_____

_____

Tool #4: Questioning

List the 5 Ws and How.

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

Activity

Give an example of a closed question. _____

_____

_____

When would you use a closed question? _____

_____

_____

Give an example of an open question. _____

_____

_____

When would you use an open question? _____

_____

_____

Tool #5: Resolving Conflict

Give an example of the following:

I lose/You lose _____

I win/You lose _____

I lose/You win _____

I win/You win _____

Which is the most assertive?

Which will improve customer service?

Job Aid

Solving Problems with Customers

Deal with Feelings	1. Express Respect.
Identify Problem	2. Listen to Understand. 3. Uncover the Expectations. 4. Repeat the Specifics.
Plan and Analyze Solution	5. Outline Solutions or Alternatives.
Take Action	6. Take Action and Follow Through.
Follow Up	7. Double Check for Satisfaction.

Skim

Seven Practical Steps to Customer Problem-Solving

Use the following seven steps to calm a person and get a solution under way. This section will show you practical ways to put these steps to work for you. You can use them in order or pick the steps that relate the most to your situation.

Step 1. **Express respect.**

Examples "What you're telling me is important."
"I will check into it right now."
"This is important."
"I apologize for the inconvenience."
"Thank you for telling me about this."
"Thank you for your patience."
"Let me make some notes about what needs to be corrected."
•
•
•

Step 2. **Listen to understand.**

Examples "Tell me what happened."
•
•
•

Step 3. **Uncover the expectations.**

Examples "Please tell me what needs to be done."
"How can we resolve this situation?"
"What can we do right away to get this situation straightened out?"
"How can I assist you?
•
•
•

Step 4. Repeat the specifics.

Examples "Let me make sure I understand what you need … ."

"To make sure I am on the right track, let me double-check what you want."

"So the problem is … ."

•
•
•

Step 5. Outline the solution or alternatives.

Examples "We have several choices … ."

"I will check into this right now and will get back to you before twelve."

"Here is a possibility."

"You can … ."

"We *do* have … ."

"There is an alternative."

•
•
•

Step 6. Take action and follow through.

Examples "Let me get you a _____ before we go to x-ray."

•
•
•

Step 7. Double-check for satisfaction.

Examples "Are you warm enough?"
"Are you comfortable?"
"Are you ready to go?"
•
•
•

Reference:
Scott, Dru. (1991) *Customer Satisfaction: The Other Half of Your Job.* Crisp Publications, Inc. Menlo Park, CA.

Adapted from *BJC Service Excellence Resource Manual.*

Key Term

Tools for Dealing with Difficult Customers

Paraphrasing Tool

Paraphrasing is simply repeating back in your own words what the other person has said.

Examples: "It sounds like you're saying that ..."

"It seems like you're ..."

With a partner, take turns sharing what bothers each of you the most at work. Then paraphrase what your partner has said. _____

_____

_____

Benefits of Paraphrasing

- Paraphrasing can help avoid conflicts.
- Paraphrasing helps everyone understand each other.

When would paraphrasing work well? _____

_____

On an index card write in your own words how to use this tool. _____

Key Term

Receiving Criticism Tool

F A R

Fogging Admitting Requesting

Fogging is a response that avoids conflict and is especially useful when criticism is unclear or unjustified. *Fogging* does not admit to fault and doesn't blame, either.

Examples: "You may have a point …"

"I'll have to think about that …"

"You might be right about that …"

Admitting means taking responsibility for something you truly did or said.

Examples: "You're right, I am late."

"That's true. I did handle that badly."

Requesting means asking for specific suggestions. This technique works especially well after admitting.

Examples: "What suggestions do you have to help me improve?"

"How could I have handled this better?"

Key Term

Receiving Criticism Tool

Criticism	Response
Criticism Given	Three Techniques • Fogging • Admitting • Requesting Information

Example:

Criticism	Response
You are 15 minutes late for your shift. Your shift is scheduled to start at 9:00 A.M.	**Fogging Response** "You may have a point … " **Admitting Response** "You're right, I am late. I will get to work on time." **Requesting Response** "You're right, I am late. What suggestions do you have to help me improve?"

Examples

Fogging Response

Write an example of a situation where you received criticism that was unclear or not fair.

Criticism	Response
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Admitting Response

Write an example of a situation when you received criticism that was true/accurate.

Criticism	Response
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Requesting Response

Write an example of a situation when you received criticism that was true/accurate but required additional information to complete the task.

Criticism	Response
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Which technique would work best if …

- you're late to work? _____
- you're accused of being unfriendly to customers? _____
- an internal customer is unfairly taking out his/her frustrations? _____

Create a difficult situation and trade with a partner.

Which response would work best? _____

Case Study 1

A patient throws a tray of food at a dietician because the food was not what the patient had ordered. The dietician calls the dietary office and yells at a clerk for the mistake. The clerk tells the dietician, "That's not my fault," and the dietician becomes even angrier.

Case Study 2

A diet office clerk likes her job, but finds a difficult to concentrate when too many people (non-clerks) come into the office. She also is distracted when other employees make personal calls or take breaks in the office.

Case Study 3

A patients calls the dietary office and complains that elephants have eaten his food. You suspect that the call may be from a patient in the psych ward.

Case Study 4

An angry nurse calls the dietary office asking for bottled water for all patients who request it. You cannot accommodate the request.

Activity

Communicating With Customers

What prevents an order from being rung up quickly?

How could orders be rung up more quickly?

Activity

Elements of Customer Service

Which is the most important element of a cashier's job?

- Greeting a customer
- Ringing up an order
- Saying a farewell

What happens when one of the above elements is missing?

Case Studies

Situation	Response
1. *Cashier A* rings up a BJC employee's lunch. However, *Cashier A* discovers that the employee's account is empty. The employee gets angry.	
2. *Cashier B* asks to see a customer's badge in order to give a discount. The customer gets angry.	
3. *Cashier C* rings up an order, but the customer has no money.	
4. Create a cashier case study.	

Activity

Team Building

What are some outstanding teams?

What makes a successful team work?

What does each team member have to do to make the team successful?

Activity

Barriers to Good Teamwork

What prevents good teamwork?

How can these problems be solved?

What are some characteristics of a team rebel?

Activity

Teamwork Self-Assessment

Highlight the statements which are true about *you*.

• Feels picked on	• Slams doors	• Asks for feedback
• Often defends own actions	• Gives dirty looks	• Is calm, even in arguments
• Complains behind others' backs	• Refuses to do some tasks	• Is prompt
• Threatens to quit often	• Folds arms often	• Goes out of way to help others
• Has trouble taking criticism	• Takes charge	• Praises others' good work
• Resents suggestions	• Complains often	• Accepts directions from others
• Often feels insulted	• Creates conflict	• Tries to find solutions that work for everyone
	• Defies authority	

1. Label the column of statements that describes the ***cooperative*** employee, the ***offensive*** employee, and the ***defensive*** employee.

2. Under which column do most of your highlights fall? _____

3. Will your highlighted statements improve teamwork? _____

Activity

Groups vs. Teams

What is a group?

_____

_____

_____

What is a team?

_____

_____

_____

Circle all the statements that members of an effective team would say.

- This is my area.
- This is our area.
- We all share responsibility for success.
- We all share responsibility for failure.
- I can slow down when the next shift worker gets here.
- This isn't my job.
- My team needs to listen to me better.
- I need to communicate more effectively with my team.

Why are teams more effective than groups?

_____

_____

_____

Activity

Case Studies

Write a response using an I-message.

Tool I need/want...

Because...

	Situation	Response
1.	A PM *PSR* arrives for her shift. The AM *PSR* is in a hurry to leave and tells the PM *PSR* to clean a room. The PM *PSR* refuses.	
2.	Mrs. Jones doesn't like her lunch. The *PSR* asks the unit secretary to order another. The unit secretary forgets, and Mrs. Jones waits an extra hour.	
3.	Three PSRs work together as a team. One of the PSRs seems to get along with the other two, but complains about their work behind their backs.	
4.	Create a PSR case study.	

Activity

Team Building Case Studies

Case Study #1

Alice, Ben, and Cassandra are Patient Service Representatives who have been asked to work together as a team. Ben and Cassandra are somewhat quiet but do their jobs well. Alice, however, feels that the group needs a leader, so she often delegates jobs to the other two. Ben and Cassandra are increasingly unhappy with the way their "team" is going.

What would you recommend to help this group operate more like a team?

_____

_____

_____

Case Study #2

Deanna, Meg, and Shonte are Patient Service Reps who work together as a team. Deanna and Shonte work well together and have become friends outside of work. Meg, however, keeps to herself and prefers to work alone. Lately Meg's work has gotten sloppy: Her rooms are not cleaned thoroughly, and she is late for work.

What would you recommend to help this group operate more like a team?

_____

_____

_____

Activity

Case Study #3

Sarah, Janis, and Latisha are Patient Service Reps who work together as a team. The three fight often about how work should be done and who should do which task. Lately the three simply ignore one another when working. Their lack of communication is taking more time than usual. Patients on their floor are sometimes put into rooms before Sarah, Janis, and Latisha have completed their work.

What would you recommend to help this group operate more like a team?

Activity

Win as Much as You Can

- Four teams
- Six rounds
- For each round, choose X or Y

Payoff Schedule

4 Xs: Lose 100 points each.
3 Xs: Win 100 points each.
1 Y: Lose 300 points each.
2 Xs: Win 200 points each.
2 Ys: Lose 200 points each.
1 X: Win 300 points each.
3 Ys: Lose 100 points each.
4 Ys: Win 100 points each.

*Key Term

Tools for Dealing with Difficult Customers

Paraphrasing Tool

Paraphrasing is simply repeating back in your own words what the other person has said.

Examples: "It sounds like you're saying that ..."

"It seems like you're ..."

With a partner, take turns sharing what bothers each of you the most at work. Then paraphrase what your partner has said. _____

_____

_____

Benefits of Paraphrasing

- Paraphrasing can help avoid conflicts.
- Paraphrasing helps everyone understand each other.

When would paraphrasing work well? _____

_____

On an index card write in your own words how to use this tool. _____

Receiving Criticism Tool

F A R

Fogging Admitting Requesting

Fogging is a response that avoids conflict and is especially useful when criticism is unclear or unjustified. *Fogging* does not admit to fault and doesn't blame, either.

Examples: "You may have a point …"

"I'll have to think about that …"

"You might be right about that …"

Admitting means taking responsibility for something you truly did or said.

Examples: "You're right, I am late."

"That's true. I did handle that badly."

Requesting means asking for specific suggestions. This technique works especially well after admitting.

Examples: "What suggestions do you have to help me improve?"

"How could I have handled this better?"

Key Term

Receiving Criticism Tool

Criticism	Response
Criticism Given	Three Techniques • Fogging • Admitting • Requesting Information

Example:

Criticism	Response
You are 15 minutes late for your shift. Your shift is scheduled to start at 9:00 A.M.	**Fogging Response** "You may have a point … " **Admitting Response** "You're right, I am late. I will get to work on time." **Requesting Response** "You're right, I am late. What suggestions do you have to help me improve?"

Examples

Fogging Response

Write an example of a situation where you received criticism that was unclear or not fair.

Criticism	Response
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Admitting Response

Write an example of a situation when you received criticism that was true/accurate.

Criticism	Response
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Requesting Response

Write an example of a situation when you received criticism that was true/accurate but required additional information to complete the task.

Criticism	Response
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Activity

Which technique would work best if …

- you're late to work? _____
- you're accused of being unfriendly to customers? _____
- an internal customer is unfairly taking out his/her frustrations? _____

Create a difficult situation and trade with a partner.

Which response would work best? _____

Activity

Case Study 1

A family arrives at the hospital with an extremely sick child. The child is placed in ICU in critical condition. One afternoon as the family is leaving to get some rest, a car in front of them stops for five minutes at the parking cashier. By the time the family arrives at the cashier, the father is angry, the mother is crying.

What communication tool(s) would you use?

Case Study 2

A doctor has had to work overtime on a critically ill patient. As she exits the garage, she realizes that she's forgotten her badge. When stopped at the gate and questioned, she becomes verbally abusive.

What communication tool(s) would you use?

Activity

Case Study 3

Tina is a new employee who has drawn the attention of many males in the department. Some of the male employees have been socializing excessively with Tina. She now is starting to focus more on socializing than her job. You know that Tina's supervisor is increasingly unhappy with the situation. Tina's job may be in danger.

What communication tool(s) would you use?

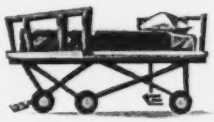
Case Study 4

Create a case study for a partner to solve.

St. Louis Community College

Customer Service Training

Supervisor's Guide



BJC Health System
Dispatch Department
St. Louis, MO

NEW PARADIGM for EFFECTIVE WORKFORCE SKILLS

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Understanding Your Customers

Question

Your Worst Customer Experience

What happened?	How did you react?	What frustrated you?	What would be the best way to handle this situation for you and your customer?

Question

Three Choices

In each of the worst customer examples, was the reaction

Nonassertive?

Assertive?

Aggressive?

Which choice would give us what we need? _____

_____

_____

_____

Why? _____

_____

_____

_____

Key Term

Define the following.

Nonassertive means _____

_____

_____

Assertive means _____

_____

_____

Aggressive means _____

_____

_____

Key Term

Assertive behavior is asking for what you want, stating your opinion, or expressing your feelings in direct and honest ways that show your respect for yourself and others. Assertion is a way of standing up for your rights, yet not violating the rights of others.

Aggressive behavior is standing up for your rights but expressing yourself in a way that violates the rights of others, or shows them no respect. Aggression may include sarcasm, humiliating insults, intimidating or overpowering the other person in order to win or dominate.

Nonassertive behavior is giving in to other people's requests, demands or feelings without regard to what you want or how you feel. Nonassertive behavior is based on the belief that other people's feelings, desires, and opinions are more important or correct than yours, or that you will experience negative consequences if you express your feelings, opinions or desires, or out of a wish to avoid conflict at all costs. Nonassertive behavior is often expressed by silence.

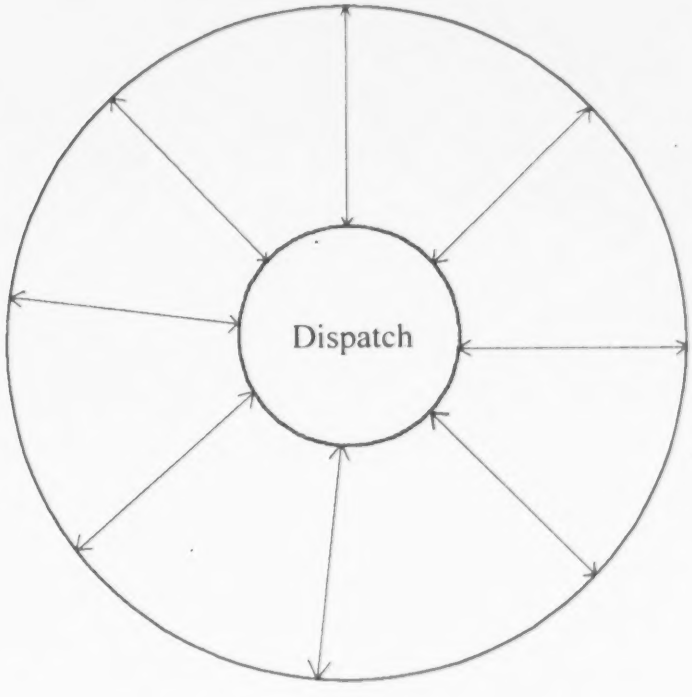
Question

What Do You Do?

On an average workday, I do the following:

Activity

Who Depends on You?



Why is the Dispatch Department important to the hospital?

Key Term

What Type of Customers Depend on You?

An ***internal customer*** is:

An ***external customer*** is:

Note Taking

List Your Customers

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Internal/External Customers

Which customers are internal? _____

_____

Which customers are external? _____

_____

Which is the more difficult to deal with? Why?

_____

_____

Question

Your Best Experience as a Customer

What has been your best experience as a customer?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

In a group, define customer service.

Customer service is _____

_____

_____

_____

Compare your definition with the other group's definition.

Observation Sheet

Is the employee doing the following?

	Yes	No
Looking and acting professionally	☐	☐
Listening and responding to all customers	☐	☐
Responding quickly when help is needed	☐	☐
Keeping personal conversation with coworkers to a minimum	☐	☐
Being assertive with all internal and external customers	☐	☐

What other behaviors did you observe? _____

_____

_____

Note Taking

Tips to Improve Customer Service

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Communicating With Customers

Activity

Role Play

Are Both Customers Getting What They Need?

Role play a scene of addressing a dispatch employee who performs well on the job but is chronically late.

What happened? _____

_____

_____

Was the supervisor successful? Why or why not?

_____

_____

_____

Was the supervisor nonassertive, assertive, or aggressive?

_____

What would you recommend that the supervisor do differently?

_____

_____

_____

Key Term

I-Messages

What's the problem with the following statement?

"You need to be on time."

How do people typically react when we start sentences with "you"?

_____

_____

_____

Change the quote to a sentence beginning with "I."

I need/want _____

because _____

How will this affect communication in your department?

In your home?

Activity

You-Messages

You-Messages—blame, judge, evaluate, label, hurt other's feelings, damage relationships, put others on the defensive, diminish other's self-esteem and damage the good feelings that are present in a relationship.

With a partner write a you-message. Exchange the you-message with another group. Change the you-message into an I-message.

You-message: _____

_____

_____

_____

I-message: _____

_____

_____

_____

Activity

Listening

What is the difference between listening and hearing?

Which is a skill: listening or hearing?

Give examples of the best listeners you know.

Activity

Listening Styles Profile Interpretation Guide

Highlight all statements that are true about you.

Preference Characteristics

P = People-Oriented Listeners

Positive Characteristics	*Negative Characteristics*
• Care and are concerned for others	• Are overinvolved with feelings of others
• Are nonjudgmental	• Avoid seeing faults in others
• Provide clear verbal and nonverbal feedback signals	• Internalize/Adopt emotional states of others
• Identify emotional states of others	• Are intrusive with others
• Are interested in building relationships	• Are overly expressive when giving feedback
• Notice others' moods quickly	• Are nondiscriminating in building relationships

A = Action-Oriented Listeners

Positive Characteristics	*Negative Characteristics*
• Get to the point quickly	• Tend to be impatient with rambling speakers
• Give clear feedback concerning expectations	• Jump ahead and reach conclusions quickly
• Concentrate on understanding the task at hand	• Jump ahead or finish thoughts of speakers
• Help others focus on what is important	• Get distracted easily by unorganized speakers
• Encourage others to be organized and concise	• Ask blunt questions
• Identify inconsistencies in messages	• Appear overly critical
	• Minimize relational issues and concerns

Adapted from Kittie W. Watson and Larry L. Barker, *Listening Styles Profile*, Pfeiffer & Co.

Activity

Listening Styles Profile Interpretation Guide (Continued)

Highlight all statements that are true about you.

Preference Characteristics

C = Content-Oriented Listeners

Positive Characteristics

- Value technical information
- Test for clarity and understanding
- Encourage others to provide support for their ideas
- Welcome complex and challenging information
- Look at all sides of an issue

Negative Characteristics

- Are overly detail oriented
- May intimidate others by asking pointed questions
- Minimize the value of nontechnical information
- Discount information from nonexperts
- Take a long time to make decisions

T = Time-Oriented Listeners

Positive Characteristics

- Manage and save time
- Let others know listening-time requirements
- Set time guidelines for meetings and conversations
- Discourage wordy speakers
- Give cues to others when time is being wasted

Negative Characteristics

- Tend to be impatient with time wasters
- Interrupt others
- Let time affect their ability to concentrate
- Rush speakers by frequently looking at watches/clocks
- Limit creativity in others by imposing time pressure

Adapted from Kittie W. Watson and Larry L. Barker, *Listening Styles Profile*, Pfeiffer & Co.

Activity

Accommodating Other Listening Styles

People Oriented	•
Action Oriented	•
Content Oriented	•
Time Oriented	•

Question

Listening

What blocks to listening do you encounter on the job?

Create categories for your list.

- Visual distractions
- Noise and movement distractions
- Mental/emotional distractions

Which category is most distracting for you?

How can you deal with these blocks?

Blocks to Good Listening

Three Main Types of Blocks

1. Visual Distractions

- Lack of eye contact
- Distance
- Writing

Eliminate Visual Distractions by:

- Maintaining eye contact.
- Leaning forward toward the speaker.
- Focus on the key points and summarize.

2. Noise and Movement Distractions

- Talking
- People moving
- Paper shuffling
- Phones
- Music, TV

Eliminate Noise and Movement Distractions by:

- Movement—Place your back to the movement if you are distracted in a conversation; sit where your ability to see movement is minimized.

3. Emotional/Mental Distractions

- Anger
- Fear
- Being unprepared
- Boredom
- Daydreaming
- Jumping to conclusions
- Worrying
- Interrupting
- Poor self-esteem/attitude

Eliminate Emotional/Mental Distractions by:

- Writing down what you are angry about and dealing with it later.
- Organizing for meetings.
- Preparing for meetings and listening.
- Taking notes if you are bored or daydreaming.
- Bringing a positive attitude to each conversation.
- Writing down the worst outcome you can think of if you are worried about something.
- Identifying the distraction.
- Writing down the distraction and dealing with it later.

Activity

What Do Nonverbals Mean?

Write your interpretation of the following nonverbals.

1. Nail biting _____
2. Arms crossed _____
3. Tapping fingers _____
4. Rolling eyes _____
5. Twirling hair _____
6. Slumping _____
7. Avoiding eye contact _____
8. Nodding _____

What Do Nonverbals Mean?

People often interpret these nonverbals to mean the following:

1. Nail biting = Nervous, uncertain.
2. Arms crossed = Unwilling to listen, uncooperative.
3. Tapping fingers = Bored, impatient.
4. Rolling eyes = Doubting, ridiculing, skeptical.
5. Twirling hair = Unfocused, nervous.
6. Slumping = Uninterested, bored.
7. Avoiding eye contact = Guilty, untrustworthy, shy.
8. Nodding = Supportive, encouraging.

Body Language Signals

Highlight the body language that is generally yours.

Posture Slumped Shoulders forward Shifting often Chin down	Erect, but relaxed Shoulders straight Few shifts, comfortable Head straight or slight tilt	Erect, tense, rigid Shoulders back Jerky shifts, or planted in place Chin up or thrust forward
Gestures Fluttering hand movements Twisting motions Shoulder shrugs Frequent head nodding	Casual hand movements Relaxed hands Hands open, palms out Occasional head nodding	Chopping or jabbing hand movements Clenched hands, or pointing Sweeping arms Sharp, quick nods
Facial expressions Lifted eyebrows, pleading look, wide-eyed, rapid blinking Nervous or guilty smile Chewing lower lip Shows anger with averted eyes, blushing, guilty look, crying	Relaxed, thoughtful, caring or concerned look, few blinks Genuine smile Relaxed mouth Shows anger with serious look, slight flush of color	Furrowed brow, tight jaw, tense look, unblinking glare Patronizing or sarcastic smile Tight lips Shows anger with disapproving scowl, very firm mouth or bared teeth, extreme flush
Voice Quiet, soft, higher pitch Hesitations, uhs, ahs, stopping in "midstream" Nervous laughter Statements sound like questions with voice tone rising at the end	Resonant, firm, pleasant Smooth, even-flowing, comfortable delivery Laughter only with humor Voice tones stay even when making statement	Sarcastic laughter Statements sound like orders Insults Vulgarity Demeaning language Negative remarks

Which column is nonassertive? Which is assertive? Which is aggressive?

What column contains most of your highlights?

Key Term

Assertive Behavior

Tips

- Ask for what you want … "I need/want … ."
- State your thought or opinion … "I think … ."
- Express your feelings honestly … "I feel … ."
- Show respect for yourself and others.
- Stand up for your rights, not violating the other's rights.
- Aim for a win/win resolution.

Activity

Role Play

Nonverbal Behaviors

With a partner(s) role play a real work-related problem.

Observers, what nonverbal behaviors did you observe?

Nonverbal Behaviors

- Tone of voice _____
- Facial expression _____
- Gestures _____
- Posture _____
- Eye-contact _____

What suggestions would you make for improving the nonverbal behavior?

Key Term

Questioning

What kind of question would you ask:

An angry customer?

A confused customer?

A sleeping customer?

An ***open question*** _____

_____

_____

A ***closed question*** _____

_____

_____

Key Term

Questioning

What are the "*5 Ws*?"

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

[and _____]

Which of the ***5 Ws and How*** create open questions and which create closed?

Open Questions	**Closed Questions**

Activity

Using the Communication Tools

Review

What tools have we discussed?

What are the disadvantages and advantages of each?

Tool	Disadvantage	Advantage

Does timing and place play a part in how successful each tool will be?

- Would an I-message work on an elevator?
- Would addressing someone's listening style be effective 5 minutes before the end of a shift?

Finding Solutions On the Job

Activity

Case Study 1

A patient, Mr. Smith, was taken to X-ray on Monday afternoon. The hallway was chilly, and Mr. Smith complained about the cold. At X-ray, the transporter helped Mr. Smith up and into the rest room. Afterwards, the transporter helped Mr. Smith back into the wheelchair. Mr. Smith's gown accidentally opened in the back, revealing Mr. Smith's bare bottom to the other waiting patients.

In anger, Mr. Smith began cursing at the transporter. A nurse stepped in to help and was also verbally abused. The nurse called an orderly to have the patient moved from the area. When the orderly arrived, Mr. Smith became violent. Security was called to help remove Mr. Smith from the area.

As a supervisor, what would you do?

In the situation, what is the symptom and what is the problem?

Activity

Case Study: Feelings vs. Problem

What is the patient/customer feeling?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

What is the problem?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Key Term

Resolving Conflict

Create examples of the following.

- _____ I lose/You lose
- _____ I win/You lose
- _____ I lose/You win
- _____ I win/You win

Which of the four is most common?

Which would improve customer service?

Label each of the four as nonassertive, assertive, aggressive.

Activity

Case Study 2

A transporter has 15 minutes to take Mr. Smith to the OR. The trip actually takes only 10 minutes. The transporter spends 5 minutes talking to a friend in the cafeteria. A supervisor happens to walk by and sees the transporter in the cafeteria. The supervisor calls the transporter in for a reprimand.

What is the problem, and what is the symptom?

Does this happen often? Why or why not?

How is customer service affected for both internal and external customers?

What can be done to solve this?

What would be an example of a win/win solution?

Seven Practical Steps to Customer Problem-Solving

Use the following seven steps to calm a person and get a solution under way. This section will show you practical ways to put these steps to work for you. You can use them in order or pick the steps that relate the most to your situation.

Step 1. Express respect.

Examples "What you're telling me is important."
"I will check into it right now."
"This is important."
"I apologize for the inconvenience."
"Thank you for telling me about this."
"Thank you for your patience."
"Let me make some notes about what needs to be corrected."
•
•
•

Step 2. Listen to understand.

Examples "Tell me what happened."
•
•
•

Step 3. Uncover the expectations.

Examples "Please tell me what needs to be done."
"How can we resolve this situation?"
"What can we do right away to get this situation straightened out?"
"How can I assist you?
•
•
•

Step 4. Repeat the specifics.

Examples "Let me make sure I understand what you need... ."

"To make sure I am on the right track, let me double-check what you want."

"So the problem is... ."

•
•
•

Step 5. Outline the solution or alternatives.

Examples "We have several choices... ."

"I will check into this right now and will get back to you before twelve."

"Here is a possibility."

"You can... ."

"We *do* have... ."

"There is an alternative."

•
•
•

Step 6. Take action and follow through.

Examples "Let me get you a _____ before we go to x-ray. "

•
•
•

Skim

Step 7. Double-check for satisfaction.

Examples "Are you warm enough?"
"Are you comfortable?"
"Are you ready to go?"
▪
•
•

Analyze the example questions. Highlight the open questions and circle the closed questions.

Reference:
Scott, Dru. (1991) *Customer Satisfaction: The Other Half of Your Job*. Crisp Publications, Inc. Menlo Park, CA.

Adapted from *BJC Service Excellence Resource Manual*.

Job Aid

Solving Problems with Customers

Deal with Feelings	1. Express Respect.
Identify Problem	2. Listen to Understand. 3. Uncover the Expectations. 4. Repeat the Specifics.
Plan and Analyze Solution	5. Outline Solutions or Alternatives.
Take Action	6. Take Action and Follow Through.
Follow Up	7. Double Check for Satisfaction.

Activity

Customer Service Tools

- ***I-Messages***

Change the following statement to an I-message.

"You need to sign this."

I need/want _____

because _____

- ***Listening Styles***

What do each of these letters represent?

P

A

C

T

What can you do to help others listen to you?

_____

- ***Body Language***

What is the most effective body language? Why?

Nonassertive
Assertive
Aggressive

What are some examples of assertive behavior?

_____

_____

_____

- ***Questioning***

List the 5 Ws and How.

When would you use a closed question?

When would you use an open question?

- ***Techniques***

Which do you use most often?

I lose/You lose

I win/You lose

I lose/You win

I win/You win

Which is the most assertive?

Which will improve customer service?

Giving and Receiving Criticism

Activity

Giving and Receiving Criticism on the Job

Your Worst Experience

What happened?	How did you react?	What frustrated you?	What would be the best way to handle this situation for you and your customer?

Role play a work-related example of giving or receiving criticism.

Was the scenario a win/win situation? _____

Why or why not? _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Key Term

Types of Criticism

Invalid Criticism

_____

_____

_____

Valid Criticism

_____

_____

_____

Vague Criticism

_____

_____

_____

Constructive Criticism

_____

_____

_____

Destructive Criticism

_____

_____

_____

Key Term

Definitions

Invalid Criticism

Criticism which is not justified, not based on truth, not factual. Invalid is often based on opinion.

Has the other person real expectations here; is the criticism unjustified?

Valid Criticism

Criticism which is justified, based on truth, factual. Valid criticism, however, can be delivered either constructively or destructively.

Did you deserve it; is it justified?

Vague Criticism

Criticism which is not specific.

Is this criticism or just a difference in opinion?

Constructive Criticism

Criticism which is directed toward specific behavior and phrased in a positive way.

Destructive Criticism

Criticism which is directed at the core of a person instead of a behavior. It is often phrased in a derogatory or attacking manner.

Key Term

Your Reactions to Criticism

Stage One *Awareness*; fight or flight?

Stage Two *Assessment*; how was this criticism delivered?

Stage Three *Action*; how will you deal with this?

Activity

Giving Criticism

Tool for Giving Criticism

State:

1. Specific Behavior 2. Effects on You 3. What You Want 4. Reaffirm

Example:

1. Specific Behavior	2. Effects on You	3. What You Want	4. Reaffirm
You have been late two days this week.	When people are late, our department falls behind schedule.	I need you to be on time.	Your being on time is going to help everyone in the department.

Activity

- Give an example of a situation that requires criticism.
- Write out what you would say using the tool for giving criticism.

1. Specific Behavior	2. Effects on You	3. What You Want	4. Reaffirm
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

- Share with the group.

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Activity

Three Effective Techniques for Receiving Criticism

1. Fogging	2. Admitting	3. Requesting feedback
Notes	Notes	Notes

Activity

Receiving Criticism

Tool for Receiving Criticism

Criticism	Response

Example:

Criticism	Response
You spend so much time on the phone and talk so loudly that I can't concentrate on my work.	I will limit my calls and talk softly.

Activity

- Give an example of a situation when you received criticism.
- Write out what you would say using the tool for receiving criticism.

Criticism	Response
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

- Share with the group.

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Key Term

Tips

Tips for Giving Criticism

When giving criticism remember to identify only the main points.

1. The specific behavior

- Describe the other person's behavior.
- Describe the specific time, place, and action.
- Keep it simple, only what the other person needs to know.

2. The Effects on You

- State your thoughts or feelings regarding the goals, your expectations, or the specific behavior.

3. What You Want

- Specify the actions you want performed or stopped.
- Specify any changes you are willing to negotiate.

4. Reaffirm

- Be aware of your feelings and express them calmly.
- Reaffirm the other's ability to make change.
- Maintain the relationship.

Never give criticism when:

- You are angry, stressed, uptight, testy.
- The timing is wrong or the person receiving the criticism can't take action on it.
- You lack specific facts or evidence to back up your criticism.
- You have not decided and discussed with the other your mutual goals or expectations.
- It is used as a power play or to make yourself feel important. This lowers the self-esteem and self-confidence.

Tips for Receiving Criticism

- Both parties must be committed to cooperation and a positive outcome.
- Ask myself, "What do I need to do to improve the situation?" (Remember, no blaming or excuses).

Dealing with Difficult Employees

Activity

Dealing with Difficult Employees

What are the most effective ways for dealing with difficult employees?

Do these techniques work with all employees?

Why or why not?

Key Term

Three Techniques for Dealing with Difficult Employees

1. Questioning/Socratic Method

Which is generally more effective? Circle A or B.

A. Telling an employee the answer.

B. Getting an employee to come up with the answer himself.

Have you learned best by A or B? _____

What questions would you ask an employee who is chronically late?

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. Paraphrasing

Paraphrasing is rephrasing what another has said.

How would this be valuable in conflict situations?

_____

_____

_____

_____

3. Gripes to Goals

On the following page is a tool which refocuses negative behavior to constructive goal setting.

When would this be applicable to you?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Activity

Gripes to Goals

A tool that reshapes negativity into positive action steps.

"My gripe (or anxiety or frustration) about what's happening is … ."

"My real concern is … ."

"What I am really wishing for is … ."

"Therefore, my goal is to … ."

Key Term

A Difficult Employee Scenario

Transporter Jones is a talkative employee. Though outgoing and friendly, a number of complaints have been issued against Jones for excessive talking, both with internal and external customers. Jones has been an otherwise excellent employee who appears to like his job. However, the continuing complaints appear to be now irritating Jones and affecting his work.

Which technique would you use with Jones? Why?

St. Louis Community College
Cosand Center
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St. Louis, MO 63102–2810

New Paradigm for Effective Workforce Skills
St. Louis Community College at Forest Park
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